



*KŪKULU KE EA A KANALOA*  
**KAHO'OLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION**  
**KŌMIKINA MĀLAMA KAHO'OLAWE**

811 Kolu Street, Suite 201, Wailuku, HI 96793  
Telephone (808) 243-5020 Fax (808) 243-5885  
Website: <http://kahoolawe.hawaii.gov>

**PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, February 27, 2023**

3:00 pm

In person at 1151 Punchbowl St, Room 132

Honolulu, HI

Online via ZOOM and livestreamed via YouTube

**COMMISSION MEMBERS**

**PRESENT:** Josh Kaakua, E.D., Chairperson; Dawn Chang; 'Ānela Evans; Saumalu Mataafa; Michelle Pescaia

**EXCUSED:** Carmen Hulu Lindsey, Vice-Chair; Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.

**KIRC STAFF:** Michael Nāho'opi'i, Executive Director (ED); Daniel Morris, Deputy Attorney General (DAG); Terri Gavagan, Commission Coordinator (CC); Margaret Pulver, Public Information Specialist (PIS); Dean Tokishi, Ocean Resources Program Manager (ORPM); Paul Higashino, Restoration Program Manager (RPM)

**IN PERSON**

**GUESTS:** Keoni Fairbanks

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm. Roll call was conducted, and quorum was established with five Commissioners.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Minutes of November 9, 2022 Regular Commission Meeting**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Mataafa moved to approve the minutes of November 9, 2022. Commissioner Pescaia seconded the motion.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved by the majority of Commissioners present via roll call: Commissioner Chang-abstain; Commissioner Evans-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Kaakua stated that the public was welcomed to make comments at any time during the meetings. No public comments were made at that time.

### **IV. ACTION ITEMS**

#### **A. Authorize Executive Director to extend Base Camp Contract with Dawson, Inc. for FY24**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reviewed the action memo included in the commission packet and explained that there was no change in the work force and that the increase of approximately \$1700 in Facilities Support Workforce Service was due to the increase in hotel room rates on Maui when the workforce needs to fly into Maui the day before the access to Kaho‘olawe. He also explained that the increase in contingency transport costs was due to the increase in helicopter costs.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained the number of volunteers on each access will increase in FY24 due to the removal of COVID restrictions.

Commissioner Mataafa asked for clarification on the contingency travel increase. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded it was an option when the ‘Ōhua is not functioning and base camp staff need to be transported. The helicopter transportation also reduces the number of back-to-back boat runs. The cost of a boat run was approximately \$3000 as opposed to \$1400 for a helicopter run. It also reduced wear on the boat.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Chang moved to authorize the Executive Director to extend the Base Camp Management Contract with Dawson, Inc. for the period of May 15, 2023, through May 14, 2024 in the amount of \$505,768.76. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Evans-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye.

#### **B. Authorize Executive Director to extend Communication Services Contract with Harmer Radio and Electronics Inc. for FY24**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the extension was the same as the current year’s contract. He reviewed the breakdown of services as outline in the action memo. He noted that not much of the contingency funds had been used in the current year. The contract included telephone, voice, data, and radio to Kaho‘olawe.

Commissioner Mataafa asked if contingency services were used so far in FY23. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded nothing was used so far. He also explained that unutilized contingency funding would be returned to the trust fund.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i added that current communication costs were being funded by an IMLS grant. Whatever is not used will be spent on technology. He noted that there

was another IMLS grant application for FY2024-2025. He also noted that the amount listed in the action memo was incorrect; the correct amount should be \$75,012.07.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Chang moved to authorize the Executive Director to extend the Communication Contract with Harmer Radio and Electronics, Inc. for the period May 1, 2023, through April 30, 2024, in the amount of \$75,012.07. Commissioner Mataafa seconded the motion.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved by unanimously via roll call: Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Evans-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye.

## **V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

### **A. Legislative Update**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reviewed the introduced legislation as outlined at the previous meeting. The primary focus of this legislative session was to make the \$400,000 received last year a permanent allocation, get a couple of new positions, and receive a new identification program number for the KIRC.

He noted that HB354 and HB571 HD1 were identical; HB571 was introduced by the Hawaiian Caucus. Both bills would provide \$400,000 and the two new positions. The companion Senate Bill 100 was introduced by Senator Inouye. Both bills were heard and passed by their respective technical committees, Water and Land and staff was waiting for hearings in Finance and WAM (Ways and Means).

The Governor’s budget was introduced (HB300 and SB354) and it contains a new program identification for the KIRC (LNR908) and provide a full year’s funding for new positions authorized last year.

Commissioner Evans was excused from 3:39 pm to 3:43 pm.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i also noted Governor Green’s proposed changes to FB2023-2025 Executive Budget and budget summary which were included in the Commission packet along with the page listing funding for the KIRC. If this budget gets adopted into the State budget, this funding will be recurring.

Commissioner Chang commented that the KIRC was among other agencies which are administratively attached to DLNR. These agencies speak on their own behalf; DLNR does not speak for them. She wanted to make it very clear that DLNR does not speak for them, it in no way was trying to interject or interfere with these agencies; it seeks to support them.

Commissioner Change also noted that ED Nāho‘opi‘i was well liked by legislators, very effective at advocating at the legislature and a good representative for the KIRC at the legislature.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i commented that the KIRC’s goal was to receive \$400,000 to cover base camp operations. The next goal was to receive funding for the next phase of the Kīhei Operations Center construction.

## **B. Executive Director’s Report**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that the KIRC was currently functioning at 8% under budget and that the KIRC’s budget was currently on track.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that the long-range schedule was included in the Commission packet.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i also noted that there were quite a few cancellations of volunteer accesses due to problems with the ‘Ōhua and the RO water system. The RO water system issues were related to the effects of climate change.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) needed to submit a replacement for Vice Chair Lindsey whose second term will end on June 30, 2023.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i anticipated the next Commission meeting would be held in May or June and that the Commission would need to elect a new Vice Chair so that he/she would be able to preside over Commission meeting until the governor names a new chair.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that a letter was sent to the Maui County Mayor requesting that Commissioner Mataafa be allowed to fulfill a second term.

Commissioner Mataafa commented he received a call from the Maui County Managing Director regarding the letter and told Commissioner Mataafa that he was going to make that recommendation to the Mayor since Commissioner Mataafa was willing to serve a second term.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that a request to reorganize KIRC staff was submitted to DLNR Personnel for review and if approved will be submitted to the Chair’s office for final authorization. The individual KIRC programs are considered branches for the sake of reorganization. The two new positions approved last year are Cultural Resource Specialist III and Cultural Resource Specialist II. The intent was to redescribe the Cultural Resource Specialist III position as the manager for Reserve Operations. The Cultural Resource Specialist II position will be redescribed as the Cultural Resource Project Coordinator.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated there are sixteen authorized positions but two are not filled. Three positions were requested in this legislative session—Reserve Operation Specialists (KIR Specialists) (two positions) and Ocean Program Specialist.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that the trust fund report was submitted to the state legislature as required by law. He explained that the unencumbered balance would increase due to grant reimbursements. It was estimated that the unencumbered cash balance would be approximately \$700,000 by the start of the next fiscal year.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that staff would be focusing on obtaining CIP funding for the Kīhei Operations and Education Center during the next legislative session.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that there continue to be problems with the RO freshwater system. In January the pipe disconnected from the coupling and pushed up on the shore. It will be reattached, and more weights will be added to keep the pipe submerged.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported the bearing on the ‘Ōhua was repaired. A stick also got stuck in the propeller blades. The impeller drive shaft was replaced. There are now problems with some other bearings, but the sole vendor qualified to work on Hamilton jet drives on Maui did not want to work on it. Staff was trying to get vendors from O‘ahu to come to Maui to look at it.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the ‘Ōhua was getting older and cracks were becoming more frequent. Staff will start pricing a new boat.

## **VI. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES**

### **A. Status Update on Current Commission/Administration Projects**

#### **1. KIRC Virtual Museum-Stage 3: Collaborations & Special Collections (IMLS3)**

CC Gavagan reported that all deliverables were achieved for this project. All required reports were submitted along with the request for payment. Staff would continue to catalog items in the PastPerfect database and publish the appropriate items in the new Kaho‘olawe Living Library website. Full payment was received by DLNR, and staff was in the process of having it credited to the correct account.

#### **2. KIRC Live-Stream and VR Expedition Project (IMLS 4)**

PIS Pulver explained that this was an outreach project. Footage was still being processed and that this project would end on June 30, 2023. This funding covered communication costs for island, the purchasing of equipment for the capture and processing of the footage as well as other outreach such as newsletters.

Commissioner Chang asked if staff was able to quantify how many people use this site. PIS Pulver responded that she had not checked lately but in October there had been 885 separate and unique accesses to that site. That was without any public sharing. The site will be shared publicly once more footage has been processed and uploaded. Commissioner Change requested that the QR code for this project be added to the DLNR website.

Chair Kaakua requested that the QR code also be shared with the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (PKO) access coordinators. People can think about adding to it.

There was also a discussion about how to share this with the Department of Education (DOE).

3. **Going Mobile: Upgrading the Technological Infrastructure of Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (IMLS 5)**

PIS Pulver explained this project would allow more connection between field and office locations. It will allow remote access with all new hardware including laptops and equipment and would support cloud-based services. Staff was currently going through the state procurement process to purchase the hardware and equipment.

**B. Status Update on Current Restoration Program Projects:**

1. **Coastal and Upland Wetland Restoration on Kahoolawe, HI (NAWCA-Wetlands)**

RPM Higashino reported that this project area was the temporary wetlands of Lua 'O Kelialalo. Some alien plant species have been removed. Planting will be done in October. Most of the funding will be for transportation to the island. The grant was extended to December 2023 and a total of 6,000 plants will be planted.

2. **Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa Partnership Project**

RPM Higashino reported there currently are 23 plants in cultivation; 17 are at the Olinda Rare Plant Facility in Olinda, Maui, three plants are at Maui Nui Botanical Garden and three plants are at Ho'olawa Farms. The group was looking at sending three plants to the National Tropical Botanical Gardens Kahanu Garden and Preserve.

RPM Higashino reported that the Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa working group started discussions on out planting in the wild.

Commissioner Mataafa asked for a status update on plantings from older projects. PIS Pulver explained that there was currently only one device that can do GPS location so staff would be required to physically go to the sites to assess how the plants are doing and have not been able to do so due to boat issues.

Chair Kaakua commented that there were high stakes regarding the Kanaloa plant and thanked the staff for their efforts in trying to save this plant. It was important to out plant it in the wild.

Staff noted that seeds have become viable and that project partners have gotten better at cloning.

**C. Status Update on Current Ocean Program Projects:**

1. Marine Debris Removal from Kanapou on Kaho‘olawe (NFWF Marine Debris Grant)

ORMP Tokishi reported that this grant will end on June 30, 2023. The deliverables were originally to collect five tons of marine debris to be collected with three tons being diverted to O‘ahu. However, over six tons was collected with 4.4 tons to be used for erosion control on Kaho‘olawe and 2.4 tons transported to Maui to be recycled into building material. All grant obligations have been met. He thanked every KIRC staff member who contributed to this grant project.

2. Coastal and Upland Wetland Restoration of Kahoolawe, HI (CWC Grant)

ORMP Tokishi reported 8500 plants have been planted to date in Honokanai‘a. An Ocean Resource Specialist (ORS) was hired, and she was also able to help on the ‘Ōhūa. A collaboration was started with the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Geography Department to conduct a wetland pilot study. A weather station and water quality device were installed at the Honokanai‘a wetland area. Staff started to develop a plan to reduce sedimentation, specifically in silt ponds right outside of Base Camp.

PIS Pulver reviewed the submitted grant applications as listed in the Grant Status Update included in the Commission packet.

Staff also will be submitting an appropriation request for FY24 to Senators Hirono and Schatz and Congresswoman Tokuda to rebuild Squid.

**VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/FYI**

Commissioner Evans announced that the ho‘olewa for Dr. Emmett Aluli would be held on Saturday beginning at 9:00 am at JABSOM and streamed on the Oiwi cable channel. Information about parking would be posted on the website, [www.noaemmettaluli.org](http://www.noaemmettaluli.org). Staff also announced that the ceremony would be streamed live on the KIRC’s Facebook page.

There was a discussion about how to honor Dr. Aluli. It was decided that this would be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

Chair Kaakua stated it was very important to keep the Commission at full strength and he was thrilled to have Commissioner Chang on the Commission. He encouraged the Commissioners to think about the next Chair and Vice Chair.

**VIII. NEXT MEETING AND FOLLOW UPS**

Staff anticipated the next KIRC meeting to be held in April or May 2023. Discussion about how to honor Dr. Aluli would be on the agenda.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 pm.